

# Know the Rules



The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

## KNOW THE RULES

1-800-THE-LOST

(1-800-843-5678)

[www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com)

## Cites for Statistical Research

<sup>1</sup>According to Howard N. Snyder in *Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement: Victim, Incident, and Offender Characteristics*, Washington, DC: National Center for Juvenile Justice, July 2000, page 2, based on National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data studied from 1991 through 1996, 32.8% of reported sexual assaults were committed against those who were 12 to 17 years old, 20.1% of reported sexual assaults were committed against those who were 6 to 11 years old, 14.2% of reported sexual assaults were committed against those who were 18 to 24 years old, 14.0% of reported sexual assaults were committed against those who were 5 years old or younger, 11.5% of reported sexual assaults were committed against those who were 25 to 34 years old, and 7.4% of reported sexual assaults were committed against those who are older than 34.

<sup>2</sup>*Id.*, page 4.

<sup>3</sup>*Id.*, page 8.

<sup>4</sup>Kenneth A. Hanfland, Robert D. Keppel, and Joseph G. Weis. *Case Management for Missing Children Homicide Investigation: Executive Summary*. Olympia, Washington: Office of the Attorney General State of Washington and U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, May 1997, page 2.

<sup>5</sup>*A Nation Online: How Americans Are Expanding Their Use of the Internet*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Commerce, 2000, page 7.

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## DON'T GO OUT ALONE

There is safety in numbers and this rule isn't just for little kids, it applies to everyone. We are always safer if we take a friend, sister, or brother.

## ALWAYS TELL AN ADULT WHERE YOU'RE GOING

Letting someone know where you'll be at all times is smart. If you're ever faced with a risky situation or get into trouble, your family and friends will know where to begin looking for you.

## IT'S YOUR BODY

You have the right to reject unwanted and inappropriate attention such as teasing, touching, and bullying.

## SAY NO IF YOU FEEL THREATENED, AND TELL A TRUSTED ADULT

If someone – anyone – touches you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, you have the right to say no. Whether it is peer pressure about sex, drugs, or doing something that you know is wrong, be strong and stand your ground. Don't be afraid to make your feelings known.



## Did You Know That

Girls are at serious risk of being sexually victimized? Some people think it only happens to little kids. Well it doesn't. It can happen to you and your friends and kids you know at school. If it happens to you, talk about it with an adult you trust.

### What Is IT?

Did you know that adults who abduct and molest kids mainly do it for two reasons? You know what they are? They are control and sex. And you may have already figured out that **some** people you know, adults and even guys your own age, could be interested in you for the same thing.

### Here Are Some FACTS

- 67% of all victims of reported sexual assaults were younger than 18<sup>1</sup>
- Females were more than 6 times as likely as males to be the victims of reported sexual assaults<sup>2</sup>
- Adult offenders assaulted two-thirds of juvenile victims<sup>3</sup>
- The average victim of abduction and murder is an approximately 11-year-old girl, who is described as a "low risk," "normal" kid from a middle-class neighborhood with a stable family relationship who has initial contact with an abductor within a quarter mile of her home<sup>4</sup>

### So How Can You Stay Safer? KNOW THE RULES.

There are rules to live by. Rules that remind you, like a little voice inside you that says HEY, do I really want to do this? Do I really want to go there? These are your rules for life.

### So What Are THE RULES?

- 1 DON'T GO OUT ALONE**
- 2 ALWAYS TELL AN ADULT WHERE YOU'RE GOING**
- 3 IT'S YOUR BODY**
- 4 SAY NO IF YOU FEEL THREATENED, AND TELL A TRUSTED ADULT**

We know, these rules are pretty BASIC, pretty common sense. Yeah, yeah, you've heard them a million times, but have you ever really LISTENED to them? Have you ever really thought about what they mean? We are going to talk about three girls. You may be thinking, "I know this stuff, but it can't happen to me." Well it **can** happen to you and girls like you, just like it happened to these three girls. Here are their stories.



## RULE 1

What can we learn from Laura's story? She was wise and careful, and, like her friends, she thought that she was safe in her own hometown. That's the way we all want to grow up, but we have to KNOW THE RULES. **DON'T GO OUT ALONE** - THINK ABOUT IT before you go. Remember that if you can avoid situations that put you at risk in the first place, you're already one step ahead.

### Maria de Los Angeles Martinez - Phoenix, Arizona

Maria was 17 years old in 1990 when she decided she wanted to earn some extra money. So she advertised over a local radio station in Phoenix for a baby-sitting job. A man responded to her ad, he picked her up one morning, and she has not been seen since.



### Laura Smither - Friendswood, Texas

Laura was a bright, loving 12-year-old who trusted her friends. She was cautious about strangers and new situations. She was smart and aware of her surroundings, which made her kidnapping unthinkable to her friends. She lived in a small town where everyone felt safe, in a neighborhood where everyone knew each other. Crime is often like that - we always think that it happens somewhere else. After the abduction several friends told Laura's parents, "If this could happen to Laura, of all people, it could happen to anyone. It could happen to me!"

On April 3, 1997, as her mom was making breakfast, Laura went out alone for a quick jog in her rural neighborhood. She never returned. A massive local, regional, and national search was conducted for her. Laura's remains were found 17 days later about 20 miles from her home.

What can we learn from Laura's story? She was wise and careful, and, like her friends, she thought that she was safe in her own hometown. That's the way we all want to grow up, but we have to KNOW THE RULES.

## RULE 2

**ALWAYS TELL AN ADULT WHERE YOU'RE GOING** - Not long after the man picked Maria up, she made a telephone call to her parents asking them to come and get her, but before she could give them an address, the telephone was disconnected. Again, THINK ABOUT IT. NEVER, EVER go somewhere with someone you don't know. This includes hitching rides. This includes babysitting for anyone without getting information about the family like where they live and even some references about them FIRST. Leave a telephone number and an address with your family BEFORE you go.

### Summer Nix - Spartanburg, South Carolina

Thirteen-year-old Summer started surfing the Internet in May of 1996 with a 15-year-old girlfriend. When her friend met an older guy in a chatroom called The Vampire Pub, Summer thought it was like an online game. But then they began to plan to run away together and pressured Summer to join them. Summer and her older friend hit the road with their newfound 18-year-old cyber pal on August 13, 1996. It was a journey Summer will never forget.

It took 72 hours for Summer to realize she'd made a big mistake and that she wanted to go home. On August 20 she called the police from a pay telephone in Nevada to ask for help. Summer is safe at home now, but she wishes she'd followed her own intuition. All she left behind when she ran away was a handwritten note to her mom apologizing and promising she'd be back.

**RULE 3 IT'S YOUR BODY** - Girls face a lot of situations today that put them in uncomfortable spots. You're constantly having to make decisions for yourself and are faced with peer pressure about anything from who your friends are - male or female - to exposure to drugs and sex. One more time, THINK ABOUT IT.

**RULE 4 SAY NO IF YOU FEEL THREATENED, AND TELL A TRUSTED ADULT** - Don't be afraid to stand up for yourself. Listen to your intuition and follow your best judgment. If your friends are making bad decisions, you don't have to. Have the confidence to say **NO** if **anyone** makes you feel uncomfortable about **anything**. And remember, it's never too late for you to tell an adult if anything is bothering you.

According to a U.S. Department of Commerce study, 90% of all children between the ages of 5 and 17 in the United States use computers.<sup>5</sup> To download free information about rules for cyberspace safety, visit the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's web sites at [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com) to view the brochure titled *Teen Safety on the Information Highway* and [www.NetSmartz.org](http://www.NetSmartz.org), which has interactive activities for teens and real-life scenarios of teens who encounter danger online, or call 1-800-THE-LOST® (1-800-843-5678) to request a free, hard copy of that brochure and information about NetSmartz.

## YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON



Now you know the rules. You may have always known them, but now you can really **get** them. They're like bells that go off in your head when you're faced with a risky situation. They can't get you out of every tough spot, but they might keep you from getting into one.

We know you're SMART and STRONG and ready to TAKE ON THE WORLD. Go do it, just use your head FIRST. Know the rules. From now on, these are **your** rules for life.